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Die Berliner Handschrift des Decameron, von A. TOBLER. [Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Academie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin]. It is perhaps, after all, not surprising that a work so well known and so often printed as the Decameron should still have no critical edition which the future historian of the Italian language could use with any safety. And yet the Decameron is certainly one of the most important monuments of early Italian prose. But then, the pretty stories and graceful style of Boccaccio have doubtless rather repelled than attracted the severe labors of the grammarian. At last, a good beginning has been made, and if those who follow Prof. Tobler perform their task with the same thoroughness and keenness, we shall ultimately have an edition of the Decameron of great value to the grammarian and lexicographer.

In this pamphlet we have:—

1. An accurate description of a MS. of the Decameron the writing of which is not later than the very beginning of the fifteenth century. This MS. is part of the Hamilton collection of the Berlin library;
2. A carefully compiled list of the corrupt passages which are common to the Berlin text and to the Mannelli text;
3. A list of passages in the Berlin text which offer a better reading than that of the Mannelli text; many of these readings have already been introduced into editions of Boccaccio from other MSS., or conjecturally;
4. Corrupt readings which are found in the Berlin MS. but not in the Mannelli text;
5. A list of divergent readings either of which may be adopted without changing the meaning of the text;
6. A list of divergent readings where the adoption of one or the other would change somewhat the meaning of the text.

Prof. Tobler shows conclusively that the Berlin MS. is not a copy of the Mannelli, and makes it appear very probable that the reverse is the case.

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BRIEF MENTION

Apropos of Dr. Schilling's recent review of

the Joynes-Meissner German Grammar in these columns, the Editors desire to state that the entire review was furnished to the NOTES at one time, its subsequent division into two parts being simply incidental to editorial considerations; so that the spirit and fairness of the article in question can be judged only with reference to its effect as an undivided whole. As for the title of the review, we are assured that it was already chosen before the appearance of the article on the same subject in our December number; and the paper throughout was written quite independently of any suggestion from the author of that article.

Professor F. Max Müller has published a new volume, which comprises a collection of essays, notes, and letters relating to etymological, anthropological and antiquarian topics, and has named it 'Biographies of Words, and the Home of the Aryas' (Longmans, Green & Co., New York). This volume belongs to that class of semi-popular scientific writings in which Max Müller has few equals in the charm of captivating generalization and readableness, and it is sure to find its peculiar place on every shelf by the side of the household "Chips." General readers will here find some things to satisfy their craving for those inspired deductions that spurn the scientific scaffolding by which ordinary mortals raise themselves to the apprehension of a truth; here is the philologist, to their own liking, not painfully and weakly ever holding fast to the dead weight of the logic of facts lest, perchance, the wings of his spirit may waft him through the free air of direct perception towards the very sun and center of absolute knowledge. But if Max Müller knows how to give one a refreshing airing, and to disappoint one afterwards by not providing the healthful meal for which the appetite has been sharpened, this is but one side of his character. He is a great scholar, and always gives the scientific man something to think about. Whatever our tastes may be we are all obliged to read his books, whether for admonition of how subjects should, or should not be treated; of how things are, or are not. In the present instance the 'biography' of the word *persona* is alone enough to